(b) the number of MARR units in the country showing O-meter reading especially in the State of Maharashtra and telecom district Yavatmal and what is the status as on today;

(c) whether it is a fact that the investments made for rural connectivity is not being used effectively; and

(d) the status of financial provision maintenance support system especially at Gram Panchayat level?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) Out of 201328 MARR Village Public Telephones commissioned in the country, 37939 Village Public Telephones on MARR system are faulty (about 15.17%) as on 31.1.2000.

(b) 37778 nos. of Village Public Telephones on MARR shows O-Meter reading out of total 201328 MARR VPTs commissioned in the country.

For Maharashtra, the status of MARR VPTs showing zero meter reading as on 28.2.2000 is as below:

Maharashtra State —1224
Yavatmal Telecom
District —288

(c) No Sir, investment made for rural connectivity is being used except;

(i) Some MARR VPTs are under disconnection due to non-payment of bills. Action is being taken to re-allocate them.

(ii) Some MARR VPTs are located in Gram Panchayat offices or Branch Post Offices which are kept open for a limited hours.

(iii) Some MARR VPTs which remain faulty for unavoidable reasons.

(d) There are no separate funds allocated for maintenance of MARR Village Public Telephones. These are being maintained from out of the funds allocated for maintenance of exchanges systems.

Communication facilities in North-Eastern States

†2015. SHRI SWARAJ KAUSHAL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that there is acute shortage of communications facilities in North-Eastern States;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, whether Government have prepared any ambitious plan for improving the communications facilities in North-Eastern States; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) to (c) The telecommunication facilities in North Eastern States including Assam is adequate as per demand and in fact it is well ahead of a number of States like Bihar, West Bengal etc. All the exchanges in the North Eastern States are of electronic type. As on 29-2-2000 in North-East Region, 439044 Direct Exchange Lines are working from 709 Telephone Exchanges, 18119 Village Public Telephones are working and there are 583 STD stations. However, the Tele-density of Assam is lower than All India average but it is higher than a number of States in the country like Bihar, West Bengal etc.

To further improve the telecommunication facilities in the North-East States, the targets have been fixed for the various development parameters by addition of 128000 lines of Switching Capacity, 100000 lines of new Telephone Connections, 5000 Village Public Telephone, 1500 RKMs of Microwave/UHF Transmission System and 45 Nos of Satellite Stations during 1999-2000. It is planned to provide 108000 new Telephone Connections in North-East Region during 2000-2001.

The Govt. has introduced several new telecom services and these have been introduced in the North East Region along with the developments taking place in the rest of the country. Internet facility has been made available in the States. ISDN facility is now available in all the State Capitals except Arunachal Pradesh. Intelligent Network Services have been made available in the States Capitals of NE States. Cellular Mobile Service is available in Guwahati and Shillong.

Perspective Plan for Telecommunications Services in North East Region (1997—2007) has already been prepared. The department has also planned to provide the following telecom facilities during 9th Plan period in North-East Region:—

Telephone on demand by the year 2001, ahead of the target of 2002 for the rest of the country.

Provision of reliable media to all exchange by 2001, ahead of the target of 2002 for the rest of the country;

All villages are to be provided with the telephone facility by the year 2002.